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D I A L O G U E  
BETWEEN  
BISHOP HOADLY<sup>h</sup>  
AND  
BISHOP SHERLOCK,  
ON THE  
CORPORATION AND TEST  
A C T S.

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L O N D O N :

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

**I**T is not necessary to introduce this Dialogue, between two eminent Prelates of our Church, by any leading circumstances : it is sufficient to say, that from their controversial writings upon this subject it is collected and thrown into the present form, in order to render the controversy more familiar, and to bring into one point of view what may be gathered from

## ADVERTISEMENT.

from the writings themselves, wherein the substance of it may be found. The Controversy itself is upwards of seventy years standing; and yet it contains all that has been recently advanced upon this interesting topic. The Editor, therefore, will make no apology for entering upon it without a formal description of time or place. He avowedly pretends to little originality: he endeavours only to make each party speak his own language. If it should answer the purpose of supplying any one, upon the discussion of this important question,



## ADVERTISEMENT.

tion, with an easy answer to what may be urged by the Appellants in favour of a Repeal of these Acts, his end will be answered. Nothing better, he is verily persuaded, can be said, than has already been said upon this subject by that able Advocate for the Established Church, and one of its greatest ornaments, BISHOP SHERLOCK.



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## DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

Bishop *Hoadly* and Bishop *Sherlock*.

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HOADLY.

**I**N my Sermon before the King, which has undergone so severe a scrutiny at a Committee of Convocation, I have endeavoured to set aside the *corrupted* notions of the Church, and to introduce the *true* one. This they have understood, as speaking of the same sort of Church, viz. of the *visible* Church; whereas I profess, that I meant in these words to describe no other than the universal *invisible* Church.

B

SHERLOCK.

SHERLOCK.

Whatever your Lordship may profess now, it is evident, that when you undertook to rectify the mistakes of others about particular Churches, you could mean no other than as the Committee understood you to mean, a *visible* Church: and when they found that your *true* notion of a Church, as you call it, was inconsistent with the very being of a *visible* Church, you immediately changed the idea, in your answer to the *Representation*: and though you positively affirm, that what you said about *inconsistent images, by daily additions, united in the notion of the Church of Christ, related to modern notions of particular Churches*, which, as such, must be *visible*; yet you would have this pass, as a description of the *universal, invisible* Church. But whatever might be your design,

sign, in this attempt of rectifying the mistakes about particular visible Churches, or of confounding them with a true notion of the universal invisible Church, it is agreed on all hands, that your principal aim was to make way for the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts: for this your Lordship seems to own in your answer to the *Representation*, and are willing, in this respect, to be understood by all: as if you avowedly joined with the popular outcries which have been raised against those statutes, although they are the security of the Established Church, and the envy of those who hate it.

HODLY.

It is true, that I declare myself averse to the Sacramental Test, which has been required by the Legislature, as a qualification for any Civil Office; from which every one, who cannot conscientiously

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comply

comply with such terms of acceptance, is excluded, to the great prejudice of his secular concerns; or if these cannot be conveniently given up, he is then strongly tempted to make a sacrifice of his religious sentiments. And what is this, but to turn aside a sacred institution of the Gospel from its original and natural design, to a purpose against its own nature, and contrary to the end proposed by the Ordainer Himself? For what is this, but making Religion a Civil Test, and debasing the most sacred thing in the world into a political tool, and an engine of State?

SHERLOCK.

Truly this is a heavy charge; and if it could be made good, no Christian would want any other reason to be given for the repeal of the Test Act. But the charge does not affect the present question,

tion, if it be rightly stated. You say, that this is making religion a civil test: and what then? Is not religion the test in every case where an Oath is required? unless you will say that there is no religion in an Oath: and if not, what is there that will make it binding on the conscience? Whether it be taken by a Christian or a Mahometan, it implies a belief in the truths of the Gospel or the Alcoran, its duties and its sanctions: and if this be not religion, what is? If an oath, which is an appeal to heaven, founded upon a religious faith, did not include thus much, it would carry with it no *confirmation*, and could never put *an end to all strife*.

HOADLY.

Yes: but I contend, that what I said against making religion a civil test referred solely to the Sacramental Test.

SHERLOCK.



SHERLOCK.

It may be so ; but why will you confine it to this ? Do you think that there is no religion but the Sacrament ? or that any religion but the Sacrament may be debased into a political tool, and an engine of State ? I cannot suppose you mean this.—However, this will bring us to the point at once. But that we may the better understand one another, before we go any further, let us consult the Statutes themselves, for by them only we may judge whether the Legislature was blameable in requiring such a test as that of the Sacrament.

By the 13th Car. II. Stat. ii. cap. 1. it is enacted, *That no person shall in any Corporation be elected Mayor, Alderman, &c. who shall not within a year before his election have taken the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, according to the rights of the Church of England.*

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By the 23d Car. II. cap. 2. it is enacted, *That all and every person—that shall bear any office Civil or Military, &c. shall take the oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance—and shall also receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, according to the usage of the Church of England.*—The act of Toleration extends the latter of these Acts to Protestant Dissenters; the former expressly relates to them; and both are declared by 10th Anne, cap. 2. to be made for the security of the Church of England, as by law established.

HOADLY.

The intention of these Acts was plainly to keep Non-conformists of all sorts out of offices Civil and Military; but suppose they had been permitted to receive the Sacrament in their own way, would not this have answered the purpose as well, if it must be required as a qualification?

SHERLOCK.

SHERLOCK.

By no means: for in truth, this is not a qualification for an office, but it is rather the test or proof of such qualification: here is a manifest distinction to be made between the test, and the thing to be testified by it. The qualification intended, and indeed expressed by the Act is, that the person be well affected to the Ecclesiastical State and Constitution of these realms: and the receiving the Sacrament according to the rites or usage of the established Church is the proof or test required, that he is so affected. An occasional conformity, or being present now and then at the common service of the Church could be no proof of this: nor could it be said how often any man's attendance there would have amounted to such a proof. It was therefore necessary to fix upon some particular act of Church Communion

nion, which might give sufficient evidence that he was sincerely well affected to the Established Church.

The most solemn act of devotion, and therefore the least to be trifled with by outward appearance only, is the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper: this naturally offered itself, as the most substantial proof of an inward approbation of the Ecclesiastical Establishment; which was the point to be obtained.

The whole therefore is a Religious, and not, as you would represent it, a Political Act; it is for the establishment of the Church, as that involves the establishment in the State. It is not, as you would have it, making the most solemn act of devotion an engine of State; it is for the support of what is deemed, by every law, the true religion.

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HOADLY.

HOADLY.

Still, does not this imply, that the bare receiving the Sacrament any where is the Test required by the Act? and why not then in their own way?

SHERLOCK.

By no means. The bare receiving the Sacrament is no test of what is principally required, a proof of affection to the Ecclesiastical Constitution of this Kingdom. The Test lies chiefly upon the express words of the Act, *according to the usage and rites of the Church of England*. This is its security; and no other could have answered the purpose. It is a certain evidence of a man's being a friend to the communion of that Church, in which he receives it, unless you may suppose, that he may prevaricate in this, as in other common instances.

instances. But what less can be required, where there is an establishment? And without an establishment, whether it be in England or Scotland, what would become of religion? It would be a mere rope of sand; for in the midst of the different forms of religion which might be introduced, it would be difficult to find the true one in the crowd. The Dissenters in Scotland look upon themselves as under an establishment of their own, and accordingly require tests of obedience to it: why then would they abolish ours? They will admit none, but upon terms; and why must *we* be excluded from the same security?

The question is this; Is it lawful to require a proof of any one's good affection to the Ecclesiastical Constitution or State? If it be, what is the best proof? The Sacrament is not appointed to be the test of any thing but what it ought



to be a test of, whether it were required by law or not : and the presumption that he, who receives it in the Church, is a friend of the Church, is the ground and foundation, not the effect, of the law.

HOADLY.

Still the hardship remains, where conscience is not abandoned ; for the common rights of subjects are invaded by such an injunction, inasmuch as it is debarring men from those civil rights, to which all, who are equally qualified in other respects, are equally intitled : and therefore nothing can restrain subjects of a certain denomination from a capacity of holding offices of power and trust, but it must be an unjust limitation of their rights. I must therefore again profess my judgment against such unjust or false security, as either debars men from their civil rights, or debases a solemn institution of Christ.

SHERLOCK.



SHERLOCK.

And are there not public rights, as well as private? But which, do you think, ought to yield to the other? Is not a submission of the private to the public the fundamental article of all government? Every member of the community has an interest in wishing that the reins of government may be put into proper hands; and can that be done, unless there be a right to declare what qualifications shall be required of those to whom any trust in government is committed? But how will it be known whether they have such qualifications, without some proof or test of their possessing them? Every legislature is justified in excluding such by certain limitations: especially when those limitations deprive none of their civil rights, but those who forfeit them. For he who refuses to give proof of his good affection

tion to the government in Church as well as State, is as improper to be put into any place of trust under the government, as it would be to place an illiterate man at the council board, or a coward at the head of an army. Such a right is vested in every community of Christians of every denomination: and if you will complain of this, as an abridgement of liberty, you may as well complain that a man cannot defend himself but in a *lawful* way; and that too, in such a course of law as the law itself prescribes. Such a plan of Christian liberty would leave no room for Christian discipline. This must include restraints; and yet the Dissenters themselves find it necessary, and have accordingly fixed their own terms, with which every one of their communion must comply, or be excluded from it. They have subscriptions as well as we, and declarations

declarations of faith to be made, before they can be admitted into the ministry, the greatest of all trusts. I suppose if the act had permitted them to receive the Sacrament in their own way, and not according to the rite and usage of the Church of England, we should have heard nothing of the sacred institution being debased into a political tool, and an engine of State: but what security would this have given to the Church, the very object of the Act itself?

HOADLY.

But you must confess that the Corporation Act is an invasion of the subjects rights, and contrary to the maxims of Christ Jesus.

SHERLOCK.

Indeed I cannot allow this: for consider the words of the Act itself: it was expressly

expressly made "for preventing of the  
" like mischiefs (those mischiefs which  
" had happened in the reign of *Charles*  
" the First) for the time to come; and  
" for the preservation of the public  
" peace both in Church and State." Is  
it then become oppression to guard a-  
gainst injury which had been felt? or, is  
it become irreligious to defend religion,  
or the establishment of it? Surely it is  
but common prudence to keep the power  
of hurting out of their hands who had  
abused it just before, to the overthrow  
of both.

HOADLY.

Yes: but the case is now altered;  
our present Dissenters plead only for a  
liberty of conscience, and are now be-  
come peaceable subjects of that Govern-  
ment which you want to support.

SHERLOCK.

SHERLOCK.

But will they declare, that they are ready to maintain the Church of England, which is so immediately connected with the State, as by law established? No, surely: if they would, why do they dissent from it; and as long as they do dissent from it, they cannot, upon principle, mean to support it.—What says one of them, in the name of them all? Mr. *Pierce*, in his *Dissenters' Reasons*, &c. p. 6.—“ You may depend upon it, that the great body of Dissenters judge the terms of communion (in the Established Church) to be sinfully imposed.” And what are we to expect from them after this, but a total abrogation of those *terms*, whenever they can get the power into their hands; and, in consequence of this, a re-establishment of Republican principles, inconsistent with the mixed monarchy, which preserves our present liberties?

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[How far they are still inclined to destroy those liberties, may be judged of by the resolutions which some of their deputies have advanced at their public meetings for the repeal of this Act. They have resolved, among other attempts, to require a promise from the candidates at the ensuing general election, that they will use their endeavours to procure this repeal, or they will refuse them their votes.—Is this liberty of conscience, to influence the consciences of those representatives, who are entrusted with the great concern of promoting the *good of the Church*? If none are to be chosen into that important office, but those who shall be under their directions, it is easy to presage for what purposes they make such a requisition, as will shackle their consciences, under the pretence of procuring liberty of conscience. That must be a very pliable disposition indeed, which can readily conform to any directions,



rections; that will secure an election, without any further trouble; or will submit to be dictated to by one set of their constituents, whilst they profess independent principles to another: and how far they, who are of a contrary persuasion, can place confidence in the consultations of such a high court of Parliament, it is easy to judge. It requires not a prophetic spirit to foresee what service *they* are likely to do to religion, who would beat down the authority both of Church and State, in order, as it is pretended, to preserve *true* religion, in an age that seems to want it so much. It is surely an extraordinary method to accomplish this by leaving the Church defenceless, by destroying its bulwarks, and by pulling down its fences, which have been wisely placed about it by our forefathers.]



HOADLY.

But why are not our Protestant Dissenters to be indulged, as well as the Papists? Surely they may be trusted as much as the others.

SHERLOCK.

In this respect they are both put upon the same footing, as a necessary guard against occasional conformity: for what says the Act of the 3d Jac. I. cap. 4.  
 " Where divers persons popishly  
 " affected, do nevertheless, the better  
 " to cover and hide their false hearts,  
 " and with the more safety to attend  
 " the opportunity to execute their mischievous designs, repair sometimes  
 " to Church, to escape the penalty of  
 " the laws in that behalf provided—  
 " for the better discovery of such persons,  
 " be it enacted, That every Popish  
 " Recusant

“ Recusant— who shall conform— and  
 “ repair to the Church— shall, once in  
 “ every year at least— receive the Sa-  
 “ crament.”

It is plain from hence, that the receiving the Sacrament was never esteemed a qualification in our law, but a proof and test of that qualification (*viz.* conformity to the Church established) which the law in many cases requires. You see, then, that the Dissenter and the Papist is in this respect put upon the same footing. And were it not for this, how is the Established Religion to be secured against the most dangerous inroads? Either you must give up your Establishment, or preserve its guard. And if you still judge, that all security is unjust, which debars men from their civil rights; that is, which makes them incapable of holding offices of Power and Trust; you must, in consequence, assert,

assert, that no Government has any right to secure itself, by excluding from offices such as they judge unqualified: for no Government can have a right to unjust security.

Surely you will not deny that all Governments have a right, and all wise Governments will make use of it, to provide against all *probable* dangers to the State; and, in consequence of this, they have a right to provide, that all power in the State shall be lodged in such hands only as they reasonably judge to be well affected towards it. In this, common prudence, if they look no further, will govern them.

HOADLY.

All this, I say, might be thought reasonable, if Dissenters were such now as they used to be formerly; but their disaffection

disaffection to the Church is abated; and we have nothing to fear from them, though places of power and trust in Government should be lodged in their hands. Nay, it has of late years been a prevailing opinion among some members of the Church of England, that the Dissenters have quite worn off their rigid zeal against the Church; and that there is little more left in the controversy, than the difficulty about Re-ordination, and the dispute about some indifferent rites and ceremonies.

SHERLOCK.

I wish this were all true; and am willing to allow that there are many among them, who are sincere in their professions of moderation. But, alas! it is one thing to say how we would use power, if we had it; and another to know how to use it, when we have it.

But

But to let this pass.—Have any of the Dissenters declared, that they are for maintaining the Church of England as by law established? No, certainly. The utmost that has been pleaded in their behalf, is, “that their principles amount to those of a general Toleration to all peaceable subjects.” I rejoice in this happy reformation of their principles: but let me ask the Gentlemen of South Britain what they are likely to get by accepting of a Toleration, for their religion, instead of an Establishment? and that too, limited to the condition of being peaceable subjects: a condition, indeed, highly reasonable of itself, but which may be easily expounded away; and probably would be so; unless they could appear to be highly satisfied with their hard bargain. It is well known, that the Dissenters are still fond of their own principles and opinions: and we have once seen how that fondness transported them,

them, when power was in their hands. Why, then, are we not to suppose that they would use power again, if put into their hands, in the same manner; to set up what they account *pure* Religion: and to expel, what not only they, but others of higher rank, and under greater obligations to the Church, have treated as Popish and superstitious?

I must think, that we have great reason to be convinced of our mistakes in this respect; since Mr. *Pierce* has told us, how highly affronting to the Dissenters such an opinion of them is. For upon a learned Divine of our Communion suggesting this favourable judgment of their principles, he answers, “How  
“ could you suggest that we do not so  
“ much as pretend the terms of your  
“ Communion are sinful?” He goes on to give instances of these sinful terms in  
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our Communion; and then in the name of all his brethren, he passes a judgment, that makes the whole Ecclesiastical Constitution sinful:—" You may depend upon it, says he, that the great body of the Dissenters judge the terms of Communion to be sinfully imposed." This strikes not at one, or at many of our terms of Communion, but the whole establishment: the foundation itself is sin, and nothing good can be raised on it: therefore he very frankly and consistently declares, " We rejoice to see the foundations shaken, and the fabric sinking, as we never doubted but it would some time or other."—What are we to think of these hopes and these triumphs! What are we to expect, if it were once in their power to accomplish them! Will they permit, do you think, the Priests of *Baal* to live unmolested? or will they endure that the Church of England, whose foundation is



is sin, should be permitted to stand?  
No.

HOADLY.

But these Acts were made to exclude Christians from Civil Offices for the sake of their conscientious scruples: and whatever power they might have, they would be ready to grant a general Toleration, for to this they profess themselves to be steady friends.

SHERLOCK.

Here again is a misrepresentation of facts. The Corporation Act says expressly, it was for prevention of mischief; such mischief as the nation had then but just recovered from; and not for prevention of conscientious scruples. And if there be no difference between *persecuting* a man for *his* opi-

nions, and securing myself from being persecuted for *my own*, then indeed it is a persecution to exclude men, for the sake of their disaffection to the Established Church, from civil power. But surely it must be agreed on all hands, that every man has a right (much more every Government) to secure himself against persecution, and from having any thing, as religion, imposed on him by undue means.—The Church of *England* has felt this; and she must have a short memory, if she has already forgot what it is. What has been already, may probably be expected again from the same causes. But we all know, that power in the hands of Dissenters has once already ruined both Church and State.

What if they are now, as you think, grown friends to Toleration, surely you ought to ask yourself, before you are moved

moved by this argument, the reason why you should give up an Establishment to accept of Toleration; and why Toleration is not as good, when it is granted to Dissenters, as when it is humbly received at their hands. You should consider also, that where the Dissenters principles prevail, no Toleration is granted: for the Kirk has ever protested against it, and used their utmost endeavours to prevent it. In a word, you should consider, whether under these uncertainties, it is not wisest to trust yourself with the liberty of your own conscience.

However I am so far from disliking the indulgence which our laws have allowed the Dissenters, that I like the Establishment itself the better for any abatement in the rigour of its Statutes. But if peace and security of conscience will not satisfy without power and authority

authority in the State, it ought to be no offence to them to be told, that we owe a regard to our own consciences, as well as their's; and that though we rejoice in their liberty, yet we see no reason to part with our own security.

But it is high time to put an end to a dispute, wherein the Prince upon the Throne is involved, as well as his people. For you would do well to remember, while you are thus zealous for their rights, that the Crown itself is subject to the very same limitation. By 12, 13. Will. III. cap. 2. it is provided, That whosoever shall hereafter come to the possession of this Crown, shall join in Communion with the Church of England, as by law established. Now I would only ask you, how it comes to pass that the Kings of England should have less privilege than any of their subjects; and why that limitation is  
just

just and expedient, when applied to the Crown, which is so great an oppression, so subversive of natural right, when applied to any of the people.

I need say no more. I will, however, venture to remind you of the circumstance, which fell within your own memory, and which indeed you ought to have considered yourself, before you openly declared your sentiments, by calling for a repeal of the Test Act. It was but a few years, I believe not above eight, before your consecration to the see of *Bangor*, that an union was formed between the two kingdoms of England and Scotland. In the 5th year of Queen Anne's reign an Act was made introductory to this, entitled, An Act for securing the Church of England, as by law established: in which Act it is provided, that an Act 13 Eliz, entitled, An Act for Ministers to be of sound Religion;

Religion; and the Act of Uniformity, 13 Car. II.—“ And all other and singular Acts of Parliament, now in force for the establishment and preservation of the Church of England, and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government thereof, shall remain, and be in full force for ever.” This Act is inserted *verbatim* in the Act of Union, and declared to be “ an essential condition of the Union—“ an essential and fundamental part of the—Articles of Union.” Since then all and singular Acts in force at the time of the Union, for the establishment and preservation of the Church, are made perpetual, you would do well to consider whether the Test Act did not come under this description; and the rather, because by an Act of Parliament 10 Anne, cap. 2. it is declared concerning the Corporation and Test Acts, “ that both—were made for the security



" rity of the Church of England, as by  
 " law established."

Now if these Acts were, as it is declared by the Legislature, made for the security of the Church established; and if all such Acts are fundamentals of the Union, and to continue in force for ever, you, as Member of one of the Houses of Parliament, ought not, surely, to have called for a repeal. If this be permitted, what jealousies may not be fomented! What handle does this administer to men, otherwise disposed than you are, to break in upon the *like* security, which the *Kirk* enjoys, whenever they have power and opportunity!

When the Legislature sets limits to their own authority, they must continue the judges of those limits; and it would be great presumption in any one to pretend to say, that this consideration

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does

does effect, or how it does effect the supreme power; but there is at least so much appearance in it, as to make it very improper for private men to give judgment in the case.

HOADLY.

I cannot however put an end to this conversation, without making one objection more against the Test Act, which is, "that it is a worldly motive to  
 " induce Christians to the same one  
 " certain profession in religious matters;  
 " and to the same one certain form of  
 " words and ceremonies in public  
 " worship."

SHERLOCK.

I would to God it had produced this effect! I should rejoice to see the Test Act grow useless and out of date by the  
 the

the general conformity of the people of this nation. But in the mean while, I must tell you, that the Act was made for no such purpose as you suggest; the intent was to keep Dissenters out of the *State*, not to force them into the *Church*; which may appear in part from hence, that their meetings were tolerated by the very Act, in the first of *William* and *Mary*, which expressly extends the Act to them.

HOADLY.

Whatever the intent was, the effect is, that men are tempted by this Act to outward conformity, and then made hypocrites.

SHERLOCK.

I allow it to be so, and what then?

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HOADLY.

HOADLY.

Why, hypocrisy is a very evil thing, and no man ought to have a temptation to it laid in his way.

SHERLOCK.

True still: and you might know, that to prevent this was one reason of the Occasional Bill. But though all such hypocrisy cannot be prevented, yet consider, are they, who encourage virtue and true Religion, answerable for the hypocrisy of those, who will pretend only to virtue and Religion, in order to share in the encouragement? If they are, then it is in itself a wicked thing to encourage virtue and true Religion; and that father is a wicked man, who rewards one son for *doing well*, because hereby he may possibly tempt another to *making a shew* of doing well.

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A gentleman in the country, who shews some mark of favour to his poor neighbours, who religiously attend the public service of God, is really, by so doing, drawing upon himself the wrath of God; upon these principles, by laying a temptation before others to make an *appearance* of being better than they really are, they may share in his favours too. If these consequences are good, then I am sure that "the worship of God and the neglect of it, Religion and Irreligion ought to be set on an equal foot in the world." But if they are false, then your objection against the Test has no weight in it, and it will be *lawful to do right*, notwithstanding that some perhaps may make a *wrong use* of our so doing.

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Here the Disputants parted; and all attempts for a repeal of the Test Act  
ceased

ceased for some time. At length however they are revived again, and repeatedly made, with some additional warmth. It is however to be hoped, that they may be defeated still by the same considerations which have hitherto inclined the Great Council of the Nation to support this Bulwark of the Church of England against all such incroachments upon its prerogatives.

FINIS.

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